2: Caroe S-4 (no date) 1953 RL1 Soviet Central Asia RL1



and Farghana, the most fertile regions, it was possible then to ride long distances without so much as seeing a blade of verdure, so small was the extent of country irrigated by the rivers. Since then much has been achieved, but even now it would be instructive and curious to see a map of these regions on which the arable lands were carefully marked, so narrow would be the strips along the rivers and at the foot of the mountains. In Farghana the irrigated areas, and even the *lalmi* [1] lands dependent on rainfall, cover broader acres than elsewhere in Turkistan. Its predominance as the agricultural, and now one of the industrial, centres of this country has a certain inevitability. The surrounding mountains with their fertilizing streams give it a climate relatively mild in summer and winter, and an alluvial soil on the deposits which fan out from the river mouths. In these oases intensive cultivation by a large population has always been possible — the cluster of townships is apparent from any map. The lie of the land has favoured the construction of many ancient irrigation channels, now supplemented by great modern works. Climate, latitude and water provide exactly the right environment for the cultivation of cotton and of the mulberry-trees on which the silk-worm thrives. The rapid transition from high mountain valley to open plain offers many natural sites for the harnessing of water-power for the production of electricity. The more recent discovery of oil and coal and quantities of valuable non-ferrous and other mineral resources in and around the valley, combined with the Soviet policy of moving textile factories to the site of production of raw material, has given it a new industrial significance not lost upon any who contemplate this land. Kokand, its old capital, and the hills around the valley were the main focus of the Basmachi movement of 1918–24 for the independence of Turkistan.

In its way the natural beauty of the oasis country is greater and certainly more intense than that of the steppe

[1] It is interesting to note that the Eastern Turks use here the same word as the Pathans of Peshawar for unirrigated cropped land. They also use *kashar*, a helping party of friends at harvest-time, and *baramta*, a raid and seizure of an enemy's flocks to indemnify oneself for a wrong; both words in common use in Pashtu.